



Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

For Immediate Release

Lisa Aug (502) 564-9203

Lisa.Aug@ky.gov

www.veterans.ky.gov

Kentucky's First Veterans Center Celebrates 20th Anniversary

THVC has served more than 2,000 veterans since 1991

WILMORE, Ky. (June 22, 2011) – It was something completely new and different for Kentucky: a skilled nursing facility dedicated to serving those who have served in this nation's military.

Now, 20 years later, the Thomson-Hood Veterans Center (THVC) in Wilmore will celebrate its 20th anniversary on June 25 with a special program for residents, families, veterans, and everyone who appreciates them.

Governor Steve Beshear supports the efforts at THVC and honoring service men and women, as well as the families who have been impacted by loved ones who have served.

"I always want us to remember those brave men and women and keep them in our prayers, keep them in our thoughts, keep their families in our thoughts and prayers because they cannot do their jobs if they don't have support from families," Gov. Beshear said.

The program will begin at 1 p.m. Marty Pinkston, former KDVA Deputy Commissioner will be singing the National Anthem and Doyle Rambo's Southland Dixie Land Band will perform. Dean Cook will provide the invocation and the 138th Fire Brigade will post colors. The keynote speaker will be Congressman Ben Chandler.

Kentucky Governor Wallace Wilkinson broke ground for the state's first veterans nursing home on Sept. 16, 1989. Originally named Kentucky Veterans Center, it was renamed in 1998 to honor two people who were instrumental in establishing the facility – George B. Thomson, a retired Army lieutenant colonel who served in World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and Beatrice Elizabeth Greenwell Hood, the first administrator of the Kentucky Veterans Center and the person who oversaw construction.

THVC admitted its first resident on Aug. 26, 1991. There are currently 373 active employees at THVC. Thirteen of them have worked there since the first resident walked in. One of them is Assistant Director of Nursing (ADON) Rebecca (Becky) Burton.

"I was hired Jan. 16, 1991 while I was in the Midway RN program," Burton said. "I was one of the first scholarship recipients to provide RNs for the facility's nursing staff. These residents are in two special categories to me: the elderly and veterans. I am grateful to THVC for affording me the opportunity to work with these favored groups as I earn my living. I have always been and still am proud to tell people where I work and what I do. I am now one of the two ADONs at THVC thanks to advancement opportunities within the facility."

Office Support Assistant, Jeannie Carr agrees with Burton about her time at THVC.

"I was in the first nursing assistant class taught at Thomson-Hood Veterans Center. The nurse who hired me told me later that she didn't think I would like being a nursing assistant, and she wasn't expecting me to stay. Here I am almost 20 years later. I feel blessed to have worked and cared for so many wonderful American heroes in those years. They have blessed and enriched my life in so many ways."

Nurse Trudy Cruse has served THVC since 1991, and is a 20-year veteran at the facility.

"I was a young, new nurse. I have always had great respect for the veterans and count it an honor to help care for them. Each veteran I have cared for through the years has left an impression on me and helped shaped me as a person and most certainly as a nurse," she said.

In 20 years, THVC has taken care of 2,308 veterans, both men and women. They have come from virtually every county of the state, have ranged in age from 35 to 105, have served in every conflict from World War II on, have served in every branch of the service, and have represented every race and religion.

“Our veterans selflessly served our country and fought for our freedoms,” Congressmen Ben Chandler said. “Now that they have come home, it is time we fight for them. Thomson-Hood has been doing just that in the Commonwealth for two decades, and I hope they continue for decades to come.”

The biggest change in its 20-year history was a major renovation in 2003. The special care unit (the Eisenhower Unit), which serves veterans suffering from various kinds of dementia, was moved from the second floor to the ground floor. This allowed Eisenhower residents to enjoy the outdoors in a secure enclosed courtyard. The renovation also built a new kitchen and craft room for Eisenhower and a new kitchen and staff training room for the rest of the facility.

“THVC sets the standard for nursing home care of veterans and all of our seniors,” said Ken Lucas, commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs. “It has done so for 20 years, and I expect it will always be a first-class facility.”

Gov. Beshear said THVC is a proud part of Kentucky’s vast military history.

“Kentucky has a lot of brave Kentucky men and women who are serving in our armed forces at the present time, and we have a wonderful Kentucky tradition of military service that goes back to the Revolutionary War.”

Note: Gov. Beshear has launched his “11-11-11” initiative to honor the Commonwealth’s loyal and brave men and women. Since Veterans’ Day is Nov. 11, 2011— or 11-11-11 – the Governor plans to highlight and honor Kentucky’s veterans and active duty service members over the next several months, leading up to a Veterans’ Day celebration at the State Capitol. To find out more about this initiative, visit www.governor.ky.gov.

###